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THE ILL-ASSORTED PAIR.

MARRIAGE;
OR,
THE BACHELOR IN SEARCH OF A WIFE.
CHAPTER XI.—LOVE AND MONEY.

"I think we are too ready with complaint
In this fair world of God's. Had we no hope,
Indeed, beyond the zenith and the slope
Of yon grey blank of sky, we might be faint."
No. 203, 1855.

THE coach bore away Keren-happuch, and poor Edith Arundel could not resist a few tears when she was out of sight, as she returned with a trembling heart to her little maid, and her double duty of cook and nurse. It is all very nice amusing work, young ladies, to go down into the kitchen,

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and, finding rolling-pin and marble slab in readiness, to make rich pie-crust and laugh with some merry companion over failures, yet eating it nevertheless with a good appetite; and, leaving all litters to be cleared away by some tidy kitchen menial, to lie down with a pretty story in your hand, and rest after the kitchen fatigues are over. Edith Arundel, however, had something more than mere pastime cookery to perform, while her means were by no means so ample as to allow of her spoiling her confections without compunction.

The breakfast was a failure, to begin with. The simple art of coffee-making was one in which Edith did not excel; she had to apply to a cookery book, and after all to use her common sense, before she could produce a cup of drinkable beverage, which Claude rejected for cocoa, and declared that the thick mess, which he had only tasted, had made him cough.

Then came the vexed question of dinner. Care had been in the habit—a very bad one for invalids—of holding a council after breakfast, in order to determine whether her master would have fish, flesh, or fowl; and sometimes half an hour's consultation had taken place before the knotty point was settled, whether the chickens were to be boiled or roast, or the fish fried, and if the vegetables were to be peas or potatoes. All this Edith had remarked, but without the power to alter it; and she now resolved to take upon herself the ordering of her brother's dietary, consulting his taste, not by needless questions, but by observing the usual habits of his appetite from day to day.

And wonderfully well did the dinner suit on this first occasion, and an immense deal of irritation and excitement were spared the invalid, who never guessed that his sister's hands—those beautiful delicate hands which in the evening were to cheer him at the piano—had prepared every article of his food, and that at the price of aching temples and a total loss of appetite.

It was not very pleasant after dinner to hear a double rap at the door, and to see two of the Miss Johnstons and their mamma, gay as butterflies, sail into the room; but Claude was asleep in an adjoining apartment—that was one comfort, and thought of herself was not the habit of Edith's mind.

Mrs. Johnston was in great distress. She had received news that her second boy at Ely, whom she had left at home because he appeared ill, had sickened of scarlet fever, and now a thousand fears arose whether any of the girls were safe. She must go to Ely, and leave the rest at Cromer; would Edith have an eye to them? They were so young, so inexperienced, so utterly unfit for scenes of suffering or sickness; Mrs. Alfred was nervous and inert; and as Edith had had scarlet fever, she felt assured, in case her girls should have taken it, that she might trust in her care and attention.

"I will very gladly do all in my power if my services are required," was Edith's reply; "but you know my brother is a great charge, and my first duty."

"Where is Care?"

"Gone to Ely, to my father."

Mrs. Johnston's countenance fell. "Dear me! but you have so much experience, that I know, dear Miss Arundel, you will look after them. Dear

girls, they are, as I say, so very unfit for trials of any kind. Are you timid of sickness?"

"Not at all; woman must not shrink from sickness, and it was well that I have been taught this, for I have had my share of nursing."

"You like it, perhaps," said Miss Ada, a pretty, amiable-looking girl of eighteen, with a most elaborate toilette; "some women do seem born for it."

"We are all born to sorrow; the bible and everyday life teach us that; but I don't suppose any of us are born nurses, any more than a man is born a carpenter or a painter."

"And do you really think, now," said Caroline Johnston, the second daughter, pointing to Ada, "that that child could dress a blister?"

"To be sure I do; why not?"

Caroline laughed affectedly, whilst Ada hid her face and shuddered.

"Well, I am off by one of Browne's carriages directly; and mind, Miss Arundel, I trust them to you."

Margaret at this moment appeared, accompanied by her brother; and, when they had left the room, she said: "What, may I ask, has Mrs. Johnston confided to you?—her keys?"

"Nay, her family," said Edith, pleasantly.

"Her family! Of all those girls, cannot one be found to take care of the rest. Two of them at least look older than you."

"Wisdom is the question, I should think," said Allan; "and the stock in trade in that family is, I conceive, not heavy. Mrs. Johnston just told us of the scarlet fever visitation to be expected; but I hope, Miss Arundel, you will not undertake any more than your present duties."

"I shall not indeed, unless they are obvious; but, in that case, I must not shrink from them."

"Shall we have an evening walk to-night?"

"I am afraid the ~~we~~ must exclude me. I have really much to do, and am tired. I think, if it is not asking too much, and the carriage has not been out to-day, Claude would like a drive, and I should be grateful for that."

Allan was too kind to hesitate, and six o'clock was fixed for the carriage to come round—Margaret agreeing to escort the Miss Johnstons to the jetty, the only walk they considered endurable in all Cromer. Edith Arundel had just seen to the manufacture of some jelly, and was preparing to enjoy a book—for, although not a literary, she was a well-informed young lady, and did not confine her studies to Dr. Kitchener or Miss Acton—when a ring at the bell was heard, and the youngest daughter of the Johnstons, a girl of fifteen, presented herself with a pout upon her pretty face, and a flush which betokened recent irritation.

"Mamma told us not to leave Lizzie, Miss Arundel; but she is so dreadfully cross, that there is no bearing her, and she has cried herself into hysterics; so I came to ask you to drop in. I can't manage her, I am sure."

Edith sighed; she would much rather have read "Palgrave's Normandy;" but she rose, and, tying on her bonnet, accompanied the chattering, empty-headed school-girl to the couch of her sick sister.

"Oh dear, what a lovely night, and the band is going to play: would you now, dear Miss Arundel, sit with Lizzie while I just run down to sisters?"

I do think it is a shame. I had so counted on leaving school and coming home, and now they make nothing of me. Always keeping me out of all their secrets; and if there is anything disagreeable to be done, it is always, 'Run, Lucy, you must go that errand;' or 'You must stay and keep Lizzie company;' and if the carriage is full on pic-nics, it is always, 'Oh, Lucy must stay at home, of course;' and I think it a shame."

"Don't you like to be useful?"

"Yes—no, I don't know that I do. I didn't come from school to be made useful."

"Did you not? What did you go to school for, then?"

"Oh, to learn things—music and French, and so on."

"Oh, I thought you went to be educated."

"To be sure, and so I did. What are French and Italian, and all those things, but education?"

"They are parts of education, no doubt; but very small parts. I think education means something more. I believe it is intended to fit us for the duties of life; and you know the world itself is only a preparatory school for eternity. We are here but for a time; there is an hereafter coming, which will never end."

"I dare say all you say is very sensible; but it is not like a girl to feel so. Then you are ages older than I am; but sisters never talk in this way; and I am sure we never talked so at Miss Prevost's."

"What did you learn there? I should like to know. I never went to boarding-school."

"Oh, everything—geography and history, and music and dancing, and French and Italian, and fancy-work; and I began German and globes, but I didn't like them. But I have some of the circums at home, and they will tell you all they taught."

"Will they? I would rather know what you learned; but here we are; this is the cottage, is it not? Now, Lucy, I am going to seem very ill-natured; but I certainly shall not take your place by your sister. We cannot do one another's duty. If I do yours, I must neglect my own. My brother will be at home in another half-hour, and I dare not be absent then. Come, our education is never finished; take a lesson to-night in denying yourself. Did you never learn that at school?"

"No: dear Miss Arundel, how you talk! I should think not indeed."

"What a miserable woman you will be if you don't begin at once. Do you think your sister wishes to see me?"

"Oh, I don't know: she is so cross; I believe half of it is temper."

"Half of what? How can you talk so? She did not make herself deformed. It was God's will that she should be a helpless, suffering cripple. Did it never strike you that it might have been your case?"

"No, it never did; but come and see Lizzie; she will be glad of any one new. Here, Lizzie," throwing open the door of an opposite sitting-room which looked on to the glorious ocean, in full view of which the girl's couch was drawn, the rays of the evening sun streaming on her pallid face—"here, Lizzie, is Miss Arundel."

The hysterical sobs were renewed at the sight of a stranger, and Edith had to exert some self-

control before she could check their violence in the invalid. Hysterics were not in her province. She had read of, but never witnessed them. She was a very practical person, however, and she saw that the heat of the sun's rays was distressing to the poor girl; so, drawing the couch on one side, and laying a handkerchief soaked in cold water on her throbbing temples, she said: "If you will only be calm, I will sit a little with you; but if you continue to sob thus, I shall go; for I shall do you harm rather than good."

By a strong effort, the girl resisted the impulse to scream, and in a few minutes was quiet.

"Shall I tell Miss Arundel what you have been crying for?" said Lucy. "I will, Miss Arundel. This is all because she thinks she shall have scarlet fever. She is no more likely to have it than I am. I might just as well cry and take on. Why don't I?"

"Because you are strong, and your poor sister weak, Lucy. 'Let not the strong man glory in his strength,' remember."

Lucy, blushing, said: "Well, I shall go and take off my bonnet. Oh, that lovely band! I can only hear just enough to make me long to be there. There is a dear of a French horn; don't you hear?"

"Yes, and you can listen to it from the balcony while I sit here; but I warn you, I must leave at eight o'clock."

"I am glad she is gone; she is so vain and selfish," said her sister, when she had left the apartment. "Oh, why was I ever born?" and she sobbed again.

"You were born, Lucy, because God willed it; it is your lot to suffer, because God has willed it also; but suffering need not make you miserable."

"Not miserable! I, a deformed, helpless creature whom no one loves."

"That cannot be true, Lizzie; or, if true, must be your own fault."

"By not loving, I mean, of course, not loving dearly or tenderly. They all hate to be with me. It is not pleasant, it is not indeed, Miss Arundel, to know that the choice of my companion for an hour always creates a squabble, and that all shirk it who can. If it is not enough to make one miserable to be helpless as I am—friendless too, to all intents and purposes—I don't know what is. I wish scarlet fever would come and carry me off. I was not crying about that; I was crying that mamma should leave me for John; but he is such a pet."

"Can you not read at all, or does reading try your eyes?"

"Oh no; I am very fond of reading. I have done the 'Heir of Redcliffe,' and now I am reading 'Heartsease;' and Miss Paul at the library says they shall have a new lot in to-morrow: but I don't know how it is; when I read about all those people who are so beautiful and so loved, it only makes me miserable because I have no beauty nor anything else lovely; and then, oh Miss Arundel"—and the poor girl laid her feverish hand in Edith's—"to look forward, to think that I can never leave this couch—that I, who once was as handsome as any of them, am now neglected and thought only a useless burden—"

"But, dear Lizzie, may I be faithful with you?"

"Yes," said she, ungraciously.

"It is not the want of beauty or grace that can ever take away the love of any human being whose love is worth having. Oh no, no; there must be some other want."

"Well, I don't care what it is; I tell you no one does love me, nobody understands me, no one pities me. I was cut off from all joy at seventeen; and why? Am I worse than others?"

"Perhaps, Lizzie, it is because God would have you to be much better than the rest, that he has laid his hand upon you. What do you think those words mean, 'Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth?'"

"I never think I have anything to do with those words; but it is no use talking: I was never meant to be sick and suffering. I never was taught that it was likely I should be so. I came home from school just as Lucy is come, with life before me, and then that horrible fall from the pony happened, and here I am. Oh that I could die!"

"God does not hear those prayers, dear Lizzie; and well is it for us that he does not. Suppose, instead of saying, 'Oh that I could die,' you would say, 'Oh that I could submit!'"

The large mournful eyes filled with tears, and Edith rose.

"Come and see me sometimes; and oh, do talk to me, Edith. I used to think you were an odd, prim girl when you and I were children at Ely. I used to wonder why your mamma never dressed you smart, or let you go to all the Christmas parties that we went to. And as you grew older, I pitied you for what I fancied must be a very dull, prosy life; but God knows I envy you now."

"Do you? Yet there are some things in my lot which, if you knew, you would think scarcely enviable, Lizzie. I have known sorrow; I know it still."

"And yet you are happy."

"I am not happy because of trial, but in the midst of trial, for I know 'God is love.'"

"I wish I could feel so."

"If you read the bible and pray, you will."

"But I am not religious; I never was taught anything of that sort, at least not in that way."

"Then how thankful you may be, Lizzie, that you are removed from many of the temptations of the world. A girl entering life without religion is like a ship going to sea without a compass. You could be fit neither for sickness nor health, single or married life, without God for your guide. Oh, Lizzie, look up to Him now, and ask Him to teach you all that you should have learned long ago; and now, good night. Shall I send Lucy, or would you like to be alone a little?"

"Oh alone, if you please;" and she buried her face in the pillow, and in silence and solitude listened to the still small voice which speaks so distinctly in sorrow, and which whispered to the suffering one lessons of kindness and mercy, if she would but listen to them.

The merry party came up from the jetty just as Edith left the Johnstons' lodgings, and she was in time to receive her brother, who looked pale and exhausted. The piteous lament of Lucy, at having missed the band and the jetty parade, excited Allan's compassion; and, giving the ponies in charge to an ostler, he offered his services as

escort to the disconsolate young lady and her second sister, and they proceeded at once to the busy scene below the cliff.

"What a queer out-of-the-world sort of place Cromer is, to be sure," said Ada. "Have you seen any of the aborigines?"

"Yes, they seem a nice, simple-minded, hearty race, shopkeepers and all; very superior to the tradespeople in the watering-places nearer London, who ape the dress and manners of their superiors too often."

"There is not much fashion in Cromer people, at all events. I cannot imagine why mamma came here, when it would have been as easy to go to Hastings or Brighton, or some other less outlandish place. There is nothing to recommend Cromer that I can see."

"Have you seen any of the lovely country walks?"

"No indeed; the roads are so dusty."

"There are the hills and heaths, Felgrig heath and Roughton, and fine shady walks in pretty woods. Are any of you botanists?"

"No; I learned the classes and orders when I was at school, I believe; but I never took any interest in botany."

"Do you like drawing? There are many lovely views hereabouts; I think the sea-peeps in the neighbourhood unequalled for their beauty, even in Devonshire."

"Oh, yes, I dare say; but the pretty roads are some way off. It is rather tiresome to leave London just now, too. We only had a fortnight of it, and we just missed hearing two such lovely singers, Didié and Bellini. Have you heard Bellini? Of course you have, though."

"I am afraid I shall seem little better than a Goth to you; but I have never heard Bellini. I never go to the opera."

"Are you in earnest? You have been there, of course?"

"Yes, I went when I was much younger than I am now."

"Oh dear, and was not the dancing splendid, and the singing divine?"

"I think the dancing was wonderful, but I cannot say I thought it graceful. The whole affair was disgusting to me; the virtuous (and virtuous ones there doubtless were) I pitied for the path they had chosen; at the immoral characters I could only look with disgust."

The young ladies thought their companion very odd. What he thought of them might be apparent from the peculiar expression of his mouth; but he gave no utterance to his thoughts.

The married sister joined them, and, shortly after, her husband, the ill-assorted pair looking as supremely indifferent to one another as ill-assorted pairs usually do.

Alfred Johnston was a well-informed and not unamiable man of the world; but having been accustomed from early childhood to hear external advantages praised and substantial undervalued, he had caught the family spirit. Good acquaintances meaning, in the opinion both of father and mother, rich and influential acquaintances, he had both in school and college life sought these. Good matches implying monied matches, he was no sooner at a marriageable age than he looked

out for such a one, and married an orphan girl, with no other endowment than her money, from the miserable home of her guardian, where her affections had remained uncultivated. He was only too glad to rid himself of his ward, to be very particular as to her choice, provided, as was the case in the present instance, the young man was respectable in conduct, of genteel connections, and not likely to bring his wife to beggary. But, alas! for a match of interest; what could the prized £400 per annum do in this case? One thing the wife found to her cost, that it could not purchase love, nor win respect. The mind, which had run to waste in girlhood, was still a wilderness of weeds. Here and there the gaudy flower of superficial accomplishments struck the eye, but it could not reach the heart; and the husband, who in the ball-room or select evening party could be so gay, so witty, and fascinating, as to draw within his magic circle crowds of admirers of his witticisms and conversational charms, was at home, sometimes drowsy, sometimes irritable, and always careless and dull in the presence of her whom he had vowed to love and to cherish.

The walk was at length over; the ocean was pursuing its ceaseless murmuring work, and the calm moon its silent journey. A few boats lay in its pale light, and anon, amid the splashing of the distant oar, the fisherman's evening song was heard; whilst here and there a mother, who had lingered on the beach with children in her arms, watching the dear one's night shelter, as it lay anchored on the sea, called a kindly "good night," which the breeze bore to the stalwart seaman, and so hurried up the cliff to her home, happy in the love of the honest heart on the billow. The sick man forgot his pains, and, lulled by Edith's evening hymn, rested like a child, and like a child, too, dreamed of paradise; the giddy worldly girls returned to their suffering sister, who lay now with better and holier feelings, as she thought on the parting words of Edith Arundel; and the husband and wife returned to their lodging at some little distance from the town, and sat down wearily by the open window. Wearily! Surely weariness should not come between husband and wife. Surely the eye that brightens in society, that flashes with mirth towards the stranger, should not now be dull, when it rests upon her who is bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh; on her whom, out of all the world, he has chosen to share his home, his fortune, and his heart. Look at the listless pair, as they sit in the moonlight on this summer evening.

"Heigho! a stupid place this Cromer! It must be altered since you were a girl, Isabella."

"I don't know that Cromer is much altered; I used to like it very much when I came here with mamma," and she sighed.

"Isabella, I shall part with that horse of yours; you never ride now; it is eating its head off."

"Pray sell the horse; I don't want it," and she pouted.

A pretty woman never looks the prettier for a pout. Isabella Johnston was not pretty, and she looked decidedly the worse. Her husband took refuge in whistling—a poor refuge, and one to which it irritates a woman to see a man resort.

"How pretty Miss Ada looked to-night in her

gipsy hat! She is certainly the flower of the family."

"I thought you didn't like gipsy hats. When I put one on the other day, you laughed at it."

"Not at it."

"Well, at me then, and that's worse."

"I did not laugh at *you*, so far as I can recollect; but the same dress does not become everybody alike."

"You always are laughing at me, I think. Pray what was that very comical speech on the jetty just now, at which you and your sisters were so amused—before Mr. Arundel too? I think you might have kept your mirth to yourself. What did I say ridiculous?"

"Nothing ridiculous; only that your geography went a little astray when you talked of our tour last year, and made the little blunder of declaring we had been to Lucerne on our route from Vevay to Geneva."

"And so we did, or Lausanne; it's all the same; but, Alfred, don't you think it was worse than making blunders to be positively unkind? You might have told me another time; and I am very sure, though those charming sisters of yours joined in the laugh, they would neither of them have known better, wise as they looked."

And, bursting into a passion of tears, the wounded wife left the room.

Loud hysterical sobs were soon heard in the bed-chamber above, and the servants saw that which, alas! was no strange sight, that their master and mistress had been disagreeing. There are waiting-maids who are proverbial nuisances in a family; but as a class, they are perhaps rather maligned. God, who had denied Isabella Johnston the inestimable blessing of kind judicious parents, had sent her, at the time of her marriage, that still rarer blessing, a true-hearted and faithful servant. She now stood by her young mistress's bed; and when the vehemence of her agitation had subsided, she began to arrange the disordered hair, and to speak a few soothing words, which, while they implied no knowledge of any dispute between the husband and wife, were at the same time calming and consoling. She was a widow, and had known and served Isabella's family in early youth. There was nothing in her appearance or manner which indicated any extraordinary superiority over her class, saving that superiority and elevation which high christian principle and good sense always impart to the female character.

Her act in entering Mrs. Alfred Johnston's service on her marriage was one of some self-denial, yet of conscientious decision. Her short married life had not been one of roses, but she had gathered on the thorny path some useful and important fruits; and no mistress had ever a more devoted friend in her servant than had Isabella Johnston in the kindly Mary Elliott.

It was past eleven o'clock, and Alfred Johnston, who had become too much accustomed to these domestic storms to feel much fluttered or distressed by them, had just returned from a ramble in the garden, and was eating a very comfortable supper, when Mary appeared. He stood in some awe of Mary—not of her tongue, nor of her gossip, nor of her censure, but of her goodness.

"My mistress is quite ready, sir; I think she

will go to sleep if you will be kind enough not to be late."

"I am horribly tired. Is she likely to have a return of those hysterics?"

"I think not, sir; but I don't think she is quite fit for talking, if you would be so kind as to be very quiet."

He whistled again, and helping himself to a glass of wine, looked at Mary as much as to say, "You can go."

"My mistress has had no supper, sir."

"Well, take her anything she likes."

"I thought, perhaps, sir, she would be more willing to take it if you carried it up to her when you went to bed: a little wine and water and a biscuit."

"Very well; and she is quiet, you say?"

"Yes, sir; good night;" and Mary wisely disappeared.

Here was a delicate post—one in which a less judicious waiting woman would have been sure to make shipwreck of her mistress's peace; but Mary knew that, to serve that mistress faithfully, it was essential that she should make no party with her against her husband, and that it was not necessary to pet and flatter her in order to minister to her good. The husband's step was rather slow as he carried the wine and water to his wife, whose head was buried in the pillows, where she lay, still sobbing, more quietly.

"I have brought you some supper, Isabella."

"I don't wish for any."

Clumsily enough he continued: "I am sorry I put you out so, about such a trifle; but you will think better of it to-morrow."

A word, a pressure of the hand, would have brought the husband's arm round the weak woman's neck in a moment, for Alfred Johnston had a heart, though he had married a spoilt ignorant girl for her money; but she went on:—

"It won't be for long. I don't think I shall live; and if I die, and the baby too, as I dare say it will, then I hope you'll enjoy my money, which is all you ever cared for belonging to me, and marry some clever woman. There's Miss Archer, she is a model girl, and Edith Arundel, whom you may have for the asking, I dare say; and the money will make you happy, I hope, without the encumbrance of her who gave it to you. And pray keep the horse for Miss Arundel; she likes riding, I believe, and she will never make you blush for her geographical blunders. Her tongue will never slip between Lausanne and Lucerne; oh no—"

Sharp rejoinders from the husband, a fresh accession of hysterics, and more retorts from the wife, soon brought matters to a climax again; and Mary was once more rung up to attend upon her mistress, whilst the irritated man flung himself on the dining-room sofa, and tried to forget his troubles in sleep, which, by the aid of a few extra glasses of wine, an assistance now too frequently called in, he shortly did, whilst Mary watched by the petulant wife until morning.

As she sat by the window during the short slumber into which towards morning her mistress had fallen, she listened to the homely talk of a young fisherman, who, with his wife, a stout, comely girl of twenty summers, was seated on the green sward before the lodgings, he mending his

nets, and she busily occupied in darning his blue guernsey, which was a little the worse for wear.

"It's dulsome work for you, Jenny girl, and I shall have a long spell of fishing, I dare say. I am going out with Nockolds in one of the Sher-ringham boats. Mayhap we shan't be back before Saturday; but if we can't get in on Saturday, don't look for me afore Monday; we never do nothing on Sundays, you know; but keep a good heart, my girl; God's on the sea as well as on the land, and neither you at home nor I afloat can do without him."

"I shall do very well, John. Better have a husband earning his bread on the sea, than wasting it at the alehouse; and shan't I be glad come Saturday to run down to the beach and hear what haul you've had?"

"It must fare dull work though, Jenny, arter the merry life you led in the kitchen yonder, and the good living too, to settle down to be a fisherman's wife."

"Dull work! you stupid man," she said; and she took the rough, brown, weather-beaten face between her two service-hardened hands, and gave it a hearty kiss—"Dull do you call it? Why, John, I love you, and that's all about it; and dull I never can be so long as you love me. Besides, have you not often said I was fit for you, made for you, and all that? Sure you have, times out of number, on the lighthouse hills, and in the woods too; and if I am fit for you and help you, and God helps me to be a good wife to you, what can I wish more? And as to lonesome, I shall never be that, John, when baby comes."

And, full of joy and hope, and perhaps a little womanly fear, she laid her head on the strong arm, and wept; but the tears were not bitter; and Mary wept too, as, turning round, she saw her sorrowful mistress, who was, alas! not fit for the wife of him on whose bosom she never poured forth her tears, and on whose love she did not anchor her troubled soul.

Away, honest fisherman, to thy perilous labours on the deep; away, young wife, to thy two rooms, with sanded floor and sloping roof, to thy coarse breakfast and hard labour. Thou art rich in the best treasure of woman—a husband's love and faith. What would he, who married for interest and for money, give for a fervent kiss like that which thou gavest thy John? What is the £400 a year compared with the blessing of his rough voice, as, gathering up his nets, he says: "God bless ye, Jenny; take care of yourself, old girl;" and so to his boat on the shore.

RUSSIA AS I SAW IT FORTY YEARS AGO.

THE VOYAGE.

It was summer when I set sail, and, being my first voyage, everything was new to me. The vessels bound to the Baltic assembled in the Frith of Forth to wait for convoy—it being war time—till they amounted to a fleet of above sixty or eighty merchantmen. At length a frigate and a gun-brig hove in sight, and, making signals for our departure, we weighed anchor, and steered down the wide estuary of the Forth.

It was a beautiful sight: the Calton-hill and Arthur's-seat sinking gradually into the west; while the Bass and St. Abb's Head raised their rocky fronts, and the Fifeshire coast stretched far to the north. We dashed boldly into the North Sea with a favourable breeze; but, being then a mere youth, I must confess I felt many misgivings when I saw the last streak of land vanish from my view. Not that I was afraid of Napoleon's cruisers, for we were well guarded, but I had heard a great deal about the storms of the voyage.

The third night, a strange vessel, doubtless a French privateer, was discovered hovering on the outskirts of the fleet. A gun or two from the "Elector" gun-brig, and a short chase, soon sent the intruder out of sight. The flashing of the guns, the various night-signals of the commodore to collect the fleet together, and the general commotion caused by this adventure, were all a delightful relief to the monotony of the voyage. The Frenchman had the audacity to appear again next day, sailing along with us on our right; but he kept out of gun shot, and it was not thought worth while to detach one of our two vessels of war to extinguish him, as the other might be assailed from an opposite quarter, and the convoy scattered. This was a *ruse* often practised by our active enemies, from which much loss was sustained by our shipping. There he hovered for two days, while the fleet crowded round their protectors, as chickens round their parent hen when a hawk appears.

On the sixth day it came on to blow, as the seamen call it, "great guns;" the enemy disappeared, and every ship had to shorten sail to the smallest possible stretch of canvass. It was the first storm I encountered while on the raging deep; and rage it did, till some of us were well nigh foundering. I confess, without the fear of ridicule, that I thought I should never see land again, and, for the first time in my life, I had recourse to my bible as a book of comfort. My pious mother had marked many passages, which she recommended me to consult in such circumstances. Such, for instance, as the sublime description in the 107th Psalm: "He commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven." For the first time in my life I thought God was speaking 'o me, and that the wonderful volume in my hand was not a terrible reprover, as I had always thought it, but a friend.

On the twelfth day of our voyage, I had the first glance of a foreign land. It was the Naaze of Norway, a bold, rocky promontory, jutting out from a coast of frowning grandeur, which extends all the way to the North Cape. We passed the entrance of Christiansand, but saw nothing of the town. Then the Seaw of Jut-

land to the south came into view, the terminating point of the low-lying and uninteresting country of that name belonging to Denmark. Leaving the apparently barren islands of Lessee and Anholt to the right, we came in sight of the mountains of Sweden, and shortly after, the green shores of Zealand refreshed my eyes after seeing nothing but sea and sky and rocks for a fortnight. We then sailed through the straits between Helsingburg in Sweden, and Elsinore in Denmark, and entered the Sound. The vessels of all foreign nations had to lower their top-gallant or light sails as a sign of respect to the power of Denmark, which is the custodian of the gates of the Baltic Sea. The castle of Cronenberg, adjoining Elsinore, famous for being the scene of Hamlet's encounter with the ghost of his father, and also for the imprisonment of queen Matilda of Denmark, sister of George III, was but a third-rate fortress, and could not have held out an hour under the fire of a British frigate. We had to anchor off the town of Elsinore, in order to pay the Sound dues, which then formed the principal revenue of that small kingdom, and against which an organised resistance seems now rising. I went on shore and looked over the place, which appeared to have nothing worthy of notice.

On resuming our voyage, we passed close to Copenhagen, which presented a very pretty appearance to the sea, and soon after entered the Baltic, around the reef and point of Falsterbo. Next day the island of Bornholm was seen on our right—a tolerably high land, well cultivated, and divided into sheep-walks or farms. We then passed Oeland and Gothland on the left, two large Swedish islands, the latter of which appeared fruitful and well wooded. Gothland had a king of its own in former days, and was the principal market of the north: it is said, indeed, that it almost rivalled Venice in the extent of its commerce. The gloomy isles of Oesel and Dago, which are in the entrance of the Gulf of Riga, next drew my attention, and we entered the the dreaded Gulf of Finland. I could see little of its shores, as we kept at a distance. Sweaborg was then a Swedish fortress, always respectable for its strength, and Helsingfors was but a fishing village. There were no warlike castles in the peaceful Aland islands, nor on the Finnish borders. The inhabitants of these places scarcely knew what war was, except their seamen, who were always found in the navies of Sweden, Denmark, and England.

Passing the desolate isle of Hogland, we at length had a view of Cronstadt directly before us. There were no frowning castles then, with their two tiers or three tiers of guns; no Fort Constantine, no Fort Alexander, no Fort Peter, nor Fort Risbank. Its defences were confined to the small and despicable fort of Cronslott, about a mile from the entrance of the mole, and a single range of guns, numbering about 20 or 30, along the walls of the harbour. A few old and worm-eaten line-of-battle ships were indeed ready to be used as block-ships for defence, but Cronstadt then could not have withstood the cannonading of a British fleet a couple of hours.

The defences of Copenhagen were thrice its strength.

We anchored between the fort of Cronslott and the Mole, while our captain went ashore to clear, and then weighed, and stood on to St. Petersburg, about seventeen miles off. The navigation was very shallow, seldom reaching three fathoms; and the wind being adverse, we were several days on this short passage. We passed Oranienbaum and Peterhoff, almost within gunshot of the imperial palace at the latter place; but the country had a barren appearance. The banks of the Neva, which river we shortly after entered, had nothing to recommend them, and were not for a moment to be compared to those of the Clyde or the Thames. A few trees here and there, and some dingy-looking or parti-coloured cottages, were seen; but no appearance of domestic life or cultivated fields met the eye. I looked on a half-civilized land. At length we approached the city of the czars, and certainly from the river it presented a majestic appearance. Its long granite quays and rows of palatial-looking houses on the right hand, and the large building of the Academy of Science on the left, flanked by other lines of scarcely less pretending residences, arrested and fixed attention; but all had a formal and dead aspect, as if the inhabitants were afraid to open a window and look out.

Passing through the bridge of boats which connects two portions of the city, we sailed close to the Admiralty on the right, and then along the front of the imperial palaces, six or seven in number, dropping anchor on the opposite side of the river, near the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, where the treasure of the state and of the church is kept. A gloomy-looking place it is, in which not a few state prisoners have found its gates an entrance to their graves.

I had leisure now to look around this whim of Peter the Great; for a mad whim it certainly was, to found a city which was to rival, in his imagination, all the capitals of the world, on a mere swamp, without anything to recommend its site, but the fact of its being a place where a river brought down the waters of Lake Ladogo to unite with those of the Gulf of Finland, and where it divides into several mouths; each mouth more shallow at some times of the year than a little trout stream, and at other seasons pouring forth raging torrents enough to carry everything on their bosom to destruction.

THE THERMOMETER.

EVER since Lord Carlisle made his memorable speech at some mechanics' institution (the Bedford Mechanics' Institution, if my memory be not treacherous), it is very astonishing how very common the expression *common things* has been in everybody's mouth. And, in sober truth, there is a sad lack of knowledge of common things in ordinary life, as everybody must have discovered to his cost. While yet schoolboys we are thrashed round the ordinary educational arena like horses in the mountebank circus. At college, when no

longer under personal fear of the birch, the cane, or any other tough perennial, exogenous or endogenous, when other and higher stimulants to mental reflection are brought into play, and the study of classical and mathematical lore bring us the hope of honour and renown, we are still mere babies too often, as to our acquaintance with many common things, which have to be picked up at last in our onward course of life, casually, as best we may.

I do not know a better school for the teaching of several common things than a marine storekeeper's shop. There if you proceed, industriously inclined, and can manage by the purchase of an old screw-driver, a mop nail, or some equally trivial article of metallic *virtu*, to enlist the sympathy, and, what is still better, to arouse the loquacity of the miscellaneous dealer in your behalf, you may cull a vast store of information useful to be known in the routine of every-day life. I have a great affection for these marine stores, with their odds and ends of bolts and bars, locks and keys, bradawls, gimlets, and screwdrivers; with their thousand and one varieties of furnaces, and stills, turning lathes, drills, anvils, and forges. Only once do I ever remember getting false information from the keeper of one of these miscellaneous repositories—these *poor men's philosophical instrument shops*, as I am wont to designate them. This once had reference to the manufacture of a thermometer, and the information conveyed was very false indeed. The error too, I am sorry to say, is very widely diffused. It extends much farther than Saffron Hill, Cow Cross Street, the New Cut, St. Giles's, and the purlieus of Clare Market, all devoted to the marine storekeeper; therefore I cannot do better than inform the reader what occurred to me some little time since, during an excursion in the latter region.

Sauntering through the lanes adjacent to Clare Market one day, admiring the rusty treasures of mechanical and chemical art, as is my wont on such occasions, I happened to see mingled with several coarser articles, some delicate thermometer tubes already filled with mercury. I demanded their price.

"Threepence each, sir."

That is tempting, thought I, even if they are badly filled—the mercury is worth a trifle—I will have four.

Regarding my right to propound a few questions established, I took the liberty of asking my philosophical instrument dealer (she was of the softer sex, and the French would have called her *Madame la Marchande*), how the thermometer tubes got there?

"Understand me," I explained; "the tubes are bought and paid for. I am satisfied with my bargain. The quicksilver is worth the money. My object in asking where you obtained them is merely this: if good, they are very cheap; so cheap, that though I use a great number, I cannot purchase them at this rate. If you don't know the maker, and if he will not warrant them, I should be suspicious of their correctness."

My next interrogatory was for the purpose of ascertaining whether my merchant knew a good thermometer from a bad one, and what she could do with thermometer tubes without their scales.

Mutual confidence having been established between us, she proceeded to unburden her mind to me at once. "Why, sir," said she, "I don't know in particular good ones from bad; but as I don't warrant them, sir, of course there can be no complaint, *can* there, sir? Now, sir, you see how it is; in the course of business we picks up with scales, and scales only sell for old brass when there isn't glass in them; so my old man thought 'twou'dn't be a bad plan to get some glasses to put in them, and now we have more glasses than scales; that's the short and the long of it, sir."

My blood waxed warm at this announcement; the reader will know why presently.

"Fit in tubes to scales," said I, hurriedly. "You don't mean to say you do that?"

"Yes, sir, to be sure I do. When my old man finds a scale a foot long, we will say, he takes a glass a foot long and screws it in. I suppose a foot measure is a foot measure, and an inch an inch, any how—ha! ha! ha!"

My informant's ignorance was too profound to benefit by any amount of instruction I could then find time to convey; so, closing the argument by conceding a foot to be a foot, and an inch an inch, I bowed and departed.

Now, considering that thermometers are not merely instruments for the use of chemists in their laboratories, but are necessary to the prosecution of brewing, malting, and various other arts, to say nothing of their employment in dwelling-houses, green-houses, hot-houses, etc., the thermometer-using public is interested in being made acquainted with the fact that a thermometer constructed according to the Clare Market formula of an inch of scale to an inch of tube, is utterly worthless and abominable. Every thermometer tube must have a scale prepared expressly for itself, and when the tube is broken the scale is of no more value than a piece of similar size, weight, and dimensions, of old brass or old wood, as the case may be, according to the nature of the scale. The reader will soon perceive why this must be so if he attends to a few remarks concerning the birth, parentage, and education of a thermometer. The instrument, as its name indicates, is a *heat-measurer*; and for aught of limitation conveyed by the name, it might be a measurer of any amount of heat from the highest grade to the lowest. Conventionally, however, the thermometer is supposed to be the instrument employed for measuring degrees of heat not above 600° of the scale of Fahrenheit, or thereabouts. Instruments which measure degrees of heat still more elevated than the above, are known as *pyrometers*, or *fire-measurers*.

It may be that the only peculiarity in a thermometer, as seen by an ordinary pair of eyes, is the existence of quicksilver or spirit, as the case may be, in a hollow tube of glass without an orifice. There is a tradition to the effect that a very worthy monarch of these isles never could understand by what means the apple got into the apple-dumpling. It may be that some ordinary observer, not yet initiated into the mysteries of glass blowing, has marvelled at the existence of quicksilver in a closed tube of glass, and that this has been the only remarkable point in connection with the thermometer; or it again may be that the additional fact has been noticed of the rise and fall of

the mercurial column by the application of heat and cold respectively. Let us see, therefore, whether there be not some points capable of development in addition to the above. The action of the thermometer is referable to the expansion of bodies by heat and their contraction by cold. Solids, liquids and gases are all amenable to this law, but solids evidently do not admit of entering into the construction of thermometers, therefore the expansive material used in filling them must either be a liquid or a gas. Thermometers containing a liquid are far more generally used than those containing a gas, for which reason let us apply ourselves to a consideration of the former. First of all we must obtain a length of thermometer tube possessing an equal bore throughout, and quite dry. One end of the tube is next to be fused in a blowpipe flame, and blown into a bulb, thus—

The bulb, and about a fourth of the tube, are next to be filled with purified quicksilver; but how is that operation to be accomplished, the aperture of the tube being so small that quicksilver cannot be poured in? The operation of filling is, like many other things, simple enough when a person knows the way to do it; which is follows.

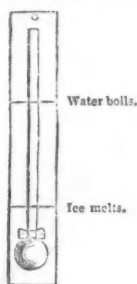
The open end of the tube is plunged into a vessel of mercury, and a spirit-lamp flame applied to the



bulb, by which treatment the air, expanding, forces its way down through the stem of the tube, and out through the mercury in the wine glass, or other receiving vessel. The source of heat now being removed, a partial vacuum occurs in the bulb, and mercury rises, taking the place of the air which had been expelled. By this treatment the thermometer bulb becomes partially filled with mercury: not *completely* filled, however; therefore the operation of heating must be repeated, which causes the mercury to boil, and to expand into vapour, and the latter escaping down through the open tube carries with it the remaining portion of atmospheric air. The flame being now removed, mercury will take the place of the vapour previously expelled. We only require the stem of the thermometer tube to be about one third filled, however, therefore the superabundant portion must be chased away by heating the bulb. The desired portion of mercury having at length been retained, the next stage of manufacture consists in expelling all the air from the stem and fusing its extremity.

These two effects are produced by an operation easy enough to describe, but requiring a little address to perform. The operator begins by drawing out the end of the tube into a somewhat delicate point, without destroying the aperture, so that although pointed it still remains a tube. He now heats the bulb in a spirit-lamp flame, and exactly at the instant when the mercury has expanded to the very extremity of the point, he melts the latter in a blowpipe jet, and thus, if successful, cuts off all communication between the mercury within and the air without.

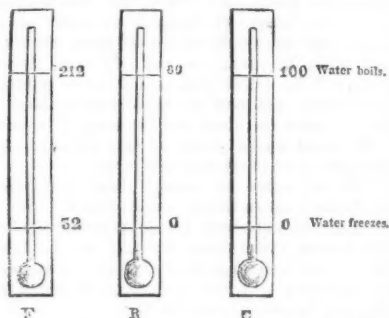
It remains now to graduate the thermometer. I will describe the process, when the reader will apprehend how thoroughly vicious is the *Clare Market* philosophy of inch for inch. The graduation involves the necessity of discovering two fixed points of known temperature between which the tube may be divided by a scale of equal parts. Now, water at the ordinary sea level always boils at the same temperature, and water always freezes, or ice always melts at the same temperature: here, then, are our two fixed points; so that having first immersed our thermometer into melting ice, and marked the point to which the mercurial column descends, and afterwards into boiling water, and marked the point to which the mercurial column ascends, we get something of the following kind—



The remainder of the graduating process consists merely in the operation of dividing the included linear space into a certain number of equal parts. Before proceeding further with the operation of graduation, let us pause to consider the inaccuracy of the inch for inch principle. It is quite evident that the length of column between freezing and boiling must be altogether dependent upon the internal diameter of the tube: and since, in all probability, the diameters of no pair of tubes are exactly coincident, such want of coincidence being a necessity of their manufacture; and even should they be coincident, we have no accurate means of verifying that fact after the tube has been closed, it follows that no two thermometer tubes can be made to accord with one scale, by any rule of lineal measurement.

Proceeding with our graduation, let us now divide the space between the melting ice or freezing water point (they are in effect the same), and the boiling water point. First of all, we require to individualize these two points by some kind of numerical designation; and, so far as the principle of the thermometer is concerned, this may be a matter of caprice. Practically, however, three schemes of graduation obtain. They are (1), the

scale of Fahrenheit, employed in this country; (2), of Reaumur, employed in some parts of the north of Europe; and (3), of Celsius, otherwise denominated the centigrade scale, which prevails in France, and in many parts of Germany.



The annexed diagram illustrates the three different schemes of graduation. The numerical indication of the freezing of water is 32 in the scale of Fahrenheit, and of the boiling of water 212; whereas in Reaumur's thermometer the freezing of water is zero, or 0; so indeed is it in the centigrade scale: but whereas the boiling point of water corresponds with 80 in the former scheme, it corresponds with 100 in the latter. All we have to do then, supposing our intention to be the manufacture of a Fahrenheit's thermometer, is to divide the intervening space between 32 and 212 into 180 equal parts, by means of a pair of compasses, continuing the graduation downwards below 32, and also upwards above 212, on the inch for inch principle: that is to say, an inch between 32 and 212 is as good as an inch above 212 or below 32. By application of the same principle, varying only the numbers, the second and third varieties of thermometer are graduated; equal parts between the freezing and boiling points being marked off above the former, and below the latter.

"But you have spoken of quicksilver as being used in the manufacture of thermometers," a reader may perhaps say to himself; "whereas I have occasionally seen a spirit thermometer. Why is this?" I will inform the reader. Mercury freezes somewhere about 40 below Fahrenheit's zero, and when frozen it is clearly unadapted for being the expansive agent in thermometers. Of course, then, we could not employ mercurial thermometers for indicating very low degrees of cold—not the cold of arctic regions, for example. What are we to do in the latter case? Why, spirit of wine (alcohol) has never yet been frozen by any amount of cold; the instrument maker therefore occasionally employs that liquid. On the other hand, the boiling point of mercury is somewhat above 600 of Fahrenheit's scale; consequently a mercurial thermometer, if long enough in the stem, may be used for indicating temperatures up to that degree, whereas spirit of wine boils at about 180 of Fahrenheit's scale, considerably below the boiling point of water; whence it follows that the use of spirit thermometers for upward temperatures is limited.

So much, then, for the philosophy of thermometers.

OLD COUNTRY CUSTOMS.

THERE are a number of old village and rural customs which from time immemorial have been observed, with more or less gravity and solemnity, in every civilized country in the world. The march of modern improvements, the spread of the modern practical and utilitarian spirit, the diminution or decrease of popular superstition, and the growth of a more enlightened intelligence among the humbler orders—these causes, either separately or in conjunction, while they have raised the masses of the people from the dense ignorance in which they formerly remained content, have naturally operated in casting numberless old customs into the back-ground. Many such have disappeared altogether, and the observance of others has so far degenerated that they are no longer to be identified in their present form with their old original institutions and ceremonies. Our own country, perhaps more than any other, has been fruitful in this peculiar class of social changes; and the history of the rural workers of England, it is probable, would have to record the demise, either partial or complete, of more simple popular observances which have become obsolete or passed into forgetfulness within the last century, than that of any other people in Europe.

But an old custom, which it may be very wise in us to honour in the breach and not in the observance, may be worth remembering, though not worth reviving. And if it throw a light on the habits, either personal or mental, of our forefathers, we may get instruction out of it, and derive more benefit from it after it is dead and buried, than they did when it was alive and in full vigour. It is with a design to some scraps of profit, as well as amusement, that we intend on the present occasion to pass very briefly in review some few of the time-honoured customs which are now fast disappearing from amongst us, and yet which we are old enough to remember as occasions of general interest, when their periodical anniversaries came round. We may as well begin with

PLOUGH MONDAY.

We must go back forty odd years in the journey of life, and must replace ourselves in a small village skirting the valley of the Exe, in Devonshire, to recall our remembrance of this, the privileged holiday of the ploughman—now a holiday no longer, and perhaps not known ever to have been such to half the ploughmen in the land. In our boyhood (it may be the case now, for aught we know to the contrary) it was the custom for the husbandmen and farm labourers to return to their regular labours, after the mirth and merry-making of Christmas, on the first Monday after twelfth-day. The Monday so distinguished was called Plough Monday, and the return to labour was inaugurated by a singular species of licence, the indulgence in which was the ploughman's privilege. Plough Monday was a Saint Monday in the popular sense of that significant term. No work was ever done on that day, but it was appropriated to the levying of a tax upon the inhabitants of the district, and inflicting plough-vengeance upon any recalcitrant individual, who, being known or supposed to possess the means of liberality, refused to contribute.

The labourers of the district assembled early in the morning; and while some dressed themselves out in quaint and ludicrous disguises, in which monstrous wigs of horse-tails were a conspicuous feature, others figured in female garb stuffed to a monstrous size; some smeared their faces with chalk, redde, or soot; while others brought the plough from the farm-yard and yoked to it a couple of horses, or more generally a team of oxen. The animals were garlanded with wreaths of ivy, or hung about with tawdry ribbons; bells were attached to their necks, and, if oxen, the tips of their horns were gilt.

By about the hour of breakfast the procession was usually ready to commence its rounds, and by this time was pretty sure to be augmented by all the rabble of the neighbourhood, in the queerest costumes they could select—the boys especially outvying each other in the frightful ugliness of their personifications. With the blast of a cow's horn perpetually wailing, with the shouts and screams of the rabble, the lowing of the frightened oxen, the tinkle of bells, and the rattle of coins or stones in money boxes fastened to the ends of poles, the uproarious assembly came on. They passed the dwellings of the poor without halting, but stopped at the door of every ratepayer, and the moment it was opened thrust in their money-boxes with a demand for largess. If the demand was complied with, the "master," whose head was bedizened with a tinsel crown, gave the signal for a shout, which instantly rent the air, and the procession moved on. The contribution demanded was proportioned to the supposed means of the parties selected; and if, as was sometimes the case, the victim refused to submit to the extortion, he was there and then visited with plough-vengeance, which consisted in ploughing up the soil round his house, and in some cases was no slight punishment.

We have a distinct recollection, in one instance, of seeing an old lady's flower-garden, with all its flower-beds, gravel-walks, box-borders, privet-hedges and fences, reduced in a few minutes to an utter wreck, because she resented the intrusion of the gang upon her premises, and threatened them with punishment for trespass, instead of paying the one-and-sixpence at which they had assessed her. In those days there were no police, and no attempt was ever made, or thought of being made, to withstand the arbitrary proceedings of a mob of this kind; and it is most likely that, had they met with any resistance, the ploughmen would have fought to the last in defence of their privileges, and with the perfect conviction that they were only defending their rights. They selected their victims on a politic principle, assessing those the heaviest who were most exposed to the defacing and destroying vengeance of the plough, exacting as much as a crown from the owner of a large garden or an orchard, and letting off the shopkeeper, whose pavement the coulter would not penetrate, for a few coppers.

It is almost gratuitous to say, that before the day was far spent, the principal actors in this mob were roaring drunk; and we are guilty of no libel on the last generation, when we add, that their drunken antics, viewed in connexion with the droll figures they had made of themselves, formed the principal charm of this once popular diversion.

The procession finished its round as the early darkness set in; and, the team and plough being restored to the proprietor, the "plough-witches," as they were called, resorted in a body to the village ale-house, of which, turning out all other guests, they took exclusive possession for the night. Here they sat down doggedly to drink up the gatherings of the day, and never rose till the last farthing was expended; after which consummation they usually wound up with a fight, and then reeled home to bed, or staggered into some ditch, or dung-yard, or empty barn, to lie till the frosty dawn roused them from their drunken lair.

Our readers will agree with us that there is no reason to regret the demise of this venerable custom. According to our recollection, it was nothing less than an abominable nuisance, which cried aloud for suppression, and it has been suppressed. Of its origin but little is known, beyond the fact that it was very ancient. Tusser, who wrote his "Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry" three hundred years ago, alludes to it in his quaint verses. But the custom dates from long before his time, and is supposed by some to have been in the Roman era a ceremonial in honour of Ceres, to propitiate the goddess, and secure her blessing on the labours of the husbandman.

In the days which "Young England" sighs to recall, there was another custom in connexion with Plough Monday. When the ploughman returned from his work on the evening of that day, the servant-maid was sent forth to meet him with a tankard of ale. If he could succeed in throwing his plough blade into the house before she reached the door, he was entitled to a cock for "throwing" at the next Shrove-tide; but if she met him with the tankard first, she gained the bird herself.

SHROVE-TIDE.

The casual mention of Shrove-tide in the preceding paragraph leads us to the brief notice of the customs of that season. When the Roman Catholic religion was in the ascendant in this country, Shrove Tuesday was the day appointed by the church for general confession, when those who confessed their sins and performed the prescribed penance were *shrove* or shrived; or, in other words, received absolution for past offences. Early in the day, the bells of every parish church in the kingdom rung out a loud peal, summoning the inhabitants to the confessional; and from all points the people, in holiday garb, flocked to their shrines to receive the blessing of mother church. Confession and penance were the business of the morning, and the after part of the day was spent in rejoicing, in popular recreations, and in the pursuit of what were supposed to be manly sports. The sport considered most appropriate for the day consisted in hanging up a poor cock by the legs, and throwing at him at a prescribed distance with short sticks or cudgels—the miserable fowl thus tormented becoming the property of the man who should succeed in severing its head from its body. The cock was selected for the victim of this barbarity because it was by the crowing of a cock that Peter was reminded of his denial of the Saviour; though by what process of logic the desert of such a retribution could be brought home to the poor bird does not appear.

The custom of dining on pancakes on Shrove Tuesday is also of Roman Catholic origin: it was in fact a practical example of catholicity, that, on the day when all rejoiced alike in the forgiveness of their sins, all should feast alike on the same simple dish. The pancakes were prepared at a particular hour, denoted by the ringing of the "pancake bell" from the church tower, after the devotional exercises were concluded.

Protestant England at this moment retains nothing of the Shrove-tide customs but the very agreeable pancakes, which are in all probability relished as much by the "heretics" of our day as by the sons of the papal mother in times past. In some country places, the custom of ringing "pancake bell" still continues; and rustics respond to its chime by jingling rhymes, which, as near as we can recollect, run in Devonshire to words something like the following:—

"Pancakes and fritters,
Says the bells of St. Peter's.
Let's have more than one,
Says the bells of Tiverton.
Sugar 'em and swallow 'em,
Says the bells down at Bolham;"

and so on indefinitely, but not in a style worth quoting. The practice of "cock-shying" on Shrove Tuesday, and on all other Tuesdays, we would hope, has by this time ceased in our hamlets and villages. We can recollect the time, however, when the cock was as necessary as the pancakes to the solemnization of Shrove-tide; we have seen the poor fowl suspended by the feet for the amusement of its tormentors, and, unless our memory deceives us after the lapse of long years, have seen him smoking afterwards upon the spit before the fire.

THE STATTEE.

This term, which is perfectly well known to thousands of our country readers, is a corruption of the word *statute*, and has reference to the statute sessions which were first established by act of parliament in the reign of Edward III., rather more than six hundred years ago. The sessions thus appointed by law were held periodically in every hundred of every shire in England. They were attended by the sheriffs and magistrates of the county, and their sole business was that of mediating between master or mistress and servant, by adjudicating in cases of quarrel, by regulating wages, by providing employment for servants who could not otherwise obtain it, and by compelling those to accept employment who sought to lead a life of idleness. This law, so far as we can learn, has never been repealed. The system which it sought to establish proved, no doubt, useful in its working, for it has gone on for six successive centuries, under all political and social changes, and exists to the present hour, with no very important modifications, and yet answers effectually its original design. The sheriffs and the magistrates have dropped their interference for more than a century, and left the system to manage itself, which it does to the satisfaction of all parties; though it is now gradually falling into abeyance, and, with the thorough intersection of the land by railways, will most likely cease to be necessary.

Still, however, in many of the midland counties,

the "stattee," or, as it is called in some places, the "mop," is regularly resorted to both by masters and mistresses for servants, and by servants for employment. The principal market-towns of the county are the usual localities of the "stattee," and there is a particular portion of the market-place, designated by the same term, upon which servants willing to be hired range themselves in rows for the inspection of the hirers. As soon as day dawns on the morning of the "stattee" fair, groups of farm and domestic servants may be met in holiday attire on their way to the town or village where the fair is held. The farm-servants carry in their hats the emblems of their calling; the ploughman bedecking his head with a coil of whipcord, the shepherd exhibiting a lock of wool, the milk-boy a tuft of cow-hair. The female servants strive to look their best, and cheerfulness is the order of the day. Employers in want of servants are too wise to defer their selection to a late hour, and the business of hiring is generally concluded by the time the bells have rung out noon. The most objectionable feature of the "stattee" comes afterwards. It being the universal custom, upon hiring a servant in the market-place, to pay him or her a small sum by way of earnest-money, the money thus received is almost as universally spent at the fair in the after part of the day.

The amusements provided on this occasion are not, as may be easily conceived, of the most commendable sort. Fiddling and dancing booths are kept open to a late hour, and there is usually a collection of rare shows—performances of feats of strength or agility—the exhibition of some phenomena in natural history, or more than equivocal *lusus nature*—and perhaps some ten minutes' tragedy of murderous or goblin interest enacted by a band of strolling players thirty or forty times in the course of the afternoon and evening. Together with these more than questionable amusements, there is going on at the same time a characteristic kind of commerce. Those of the servants engaged who are too prudent to spend their "earnest" in nonsensical vanities, have an opportunity of laying it out in recruiting their wardrobes or in purchasing such implements of their calling as they stand in need of. Smock-frocks, cotton gowns, basin hats, substantial straw bonnets, fustian jackets, leggings and clouted shoes, patterns, print-shawls, and red cloaks, with a sprinkling of Brummagem jewellery and ponderous jack-knives, form the staple of the wares exposed for sale, and compete, it is to be hoped successfully, with the attractions of the fiddler and the juggling charlatan.

At the end of a fortnight, a second or supplementary "stattee" is held on the same spot, for the convenience of employers and servants, who, being dissatisfied with each other after a fortnight's trial, have this chance of repairing, if it may be done, the mistakes they have mutually made; after which there is no further public hiring until the autumn of the following year.

FRIENDSHIP.—If a man does not make new acquaintances as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone. A man should keep his friendship in constant repair.—*Johnson.*

THREE MONTHS IN LONDON.

CRABBE AND CHATTERTON.

As the more essential blessings are common ones. Yet none are so liable to be undervalued and forgotten. They do not strike by their novelty, and their most careful observance offers no more advantage than that which accrues to all the world around. Merely to succeed in life seems to some persons far too tame a result; they wish to dazzle by the means they adopt to the end, and to arrive at eminence by new and untried routes.

To none is this temptation more powerful than to those who are conscious of being endowed with high and unusual intellectual gifts. More than one instance has occurred of such persons fancying themselves not merely exalted in degree, but also in kind above their fellow-men, and therefore privileged to set at nought the dictates of prudence and common sense, and even the precepts of religion and the commandments of God. It is remarkable that there are persons found to excuse imprudence, and even questionable morality, in men of talent, as if the possession of mental advantages entitled the owners to dispense with the obligations of moral probity.

But God has willed that all persons shall alike pay respect to the laws of rectitude and prudence which he has ordained. In all callings he will honour trust in him, the fear of God and walking in his ways; while those who forsake the Lord, the fountain of living waters, as the guide of their youth, shall in the end "lie down in sorrow."

These truths were never more strikingly illustrated than in one passage of the lives of two well-known literary characters born in the last century, the one of whom obtained an honourable eminence, while the light of the other was quenched in darkness in the very outset of his career.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, within about two years of each other, were born, the one at Bristol, the other at Aldborough in Suffolk, and both in equally humble circumstances, the celebrated Thomas Chatterton, and the equally celebrated but far more worthy George Crabbe. It is not needful to pursue the narrative of the earlier life of each—the well-known forgeries of the one, or the struggles of the other, to gain a profession for which he was peculiarly fitted. Suffice it to say that both, desiring to leave their professions—Crabbe that of a surgeon, and Chatterton that of the law—took the resolution of coming to London to try their fortunes as authors; both furnished with very scanty means, which the one characteristically had borrowed honourably of sir Dudley North, and the other had at least attempted, if he did not succeed, to obtain by a fraud from Mr. Horace Walpole.

Thus far there is a remarkable parallelism in the opening of their career. But when we contemplate their character and principles, all similarity disappears, and strongly marked contrasts take its place. Crabbe had a peculiarly retiring and modest character; Chatterton's conduct was signalised by an audacity and enterprise as peculiar, and by the aid of which he pushed himself forward into the arena of authorship at a much earlier age than Crabbe. Crabbe was naturally diffident, and,

like so many diffident characters, was only saved from weakness and irresolution by his strong reliance on Providence. Chatterton's self-reliance, on the contrary, showed itself as early as his fourteenth year, in his audacious forgery of the celebrated De Bergham pedigree, and in his saying that "God had sent his creatures into the world with arms long enough to reach anything, if they chose to be at the trouble," so often repeated by him. The advantage of talent was perhaps on the side of the latter, that of Christian principle with the former. Chatterton's was the mightier intellect, Crabbe's the stronger character. Self-confidence advanced in the one, self-government slumbered in the other. In a word, their poetic gift was all they had in themselves in common; beyond that, the "marvellous boy" was too high-spirited to seek the consolations of religion; the "poet of the poor" too conscious of his weakness to be other than dependent upon his God.

To those who study the ways of divine Providence in the career of men, how striking is the confirmation continually obtained of that truth, "Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

Chatterton's ordeal was destined to come off first. He arrived in London in the end of April, 1770, and at once sought and obtained some success with the publishers. He took up his lodgings with Mr. Walmesly, a plasterer, in Shoreditch, from whence his papers and poems are at this epoch dated. His accounts written home to his mother and sister are of the most glowing, and, alas! beyond all doubt, of the most exaggerated kind. He had made arrangements with publishers which were to produce large emoluments; had made the acquaintance of the principal wits and authors of the day; by his influence with the celebrated Mr. Wilkes he should be able to advance his relatives. But, alas! in all this day-dreaming there was no honour paid and no trust reposed in the great Giver of his talents, and though he gained introduction to several of the eminent men of the time, and undoubtedly possessed powers to make good his professions to them, yet no blessing from God rested upon his endeavours, and all was soon to close in penury and despair.

He had already, before leaving his native city for London, begun to write and talk infidelity. And, as is perhaps inevitably the case with those who spurn the refuge of faith in the time of trial, the idea of suicide had become familiar to his mind. On one occasion, he drew from his pocket a loaded pistol, and, holding it to his forehead, exclaimed: "Now, if one had but the courage to pull the trigger!"

It is then easy to divine the nature of his reflections before he resolved to try his fortune in the metropolis. He had determined to stake all on the hazard of a die, and if he failed, his principles would not fail to offer him the gloomy alternative of self-destruction.

In three months, on the 24th of August, 1770, the hour of despair came, and infidelity proved, as it has in a thousand instances, its utter powerlessness to support its victim under it. The young poet committed suicide by taking poison. No proof whatever was discovered to show that he had even gone with a cry for mercy thus rashly

and unprepared before his Judge. The floor was covered with torn up fragments of his works, and the body of Thomas Chatterton was borne from the desolate chamber in Brook Street to a pauper's grave in Shoe Lane.

During all this time Crabbe was being prepared by Providence for the mission he was to fulfil. The year 1771 arrived before he was apprenticed to a surgeon in a village near his native place. After his term had expired, a short visit to London, for the purpose of "walking the hospitals," completed his professional education. If he failed in gaining any prominent proficiency, it must be confessed it was rather owing to his utter want of means, than to lack either of perseverance or ability. He returned to his native town, Aldborough, and there commenced a very unsuccessful practice. It was during this period of his life that he formed the acquaintance of Miss Sarah Elmy, a young person apparently of singularly estimable character.

Next to a father's counsels and a mother's care, there are few things of so great value in the formation of the character of a young man, as the acquaintance of a prudent, virtuous, and christian female of his own age. A sanctified attachment awakened and sustained his best energies, and the hope of one day not only gaining a position, but also of forming that best of earthly blessings in the esteem of the Christian and the Englishman, at home, rarely fails to give a practical tone to the character.

Still, ill success as a country surgeon determined him, in the beginning of 1780, to seek his fortune as an author in London. He deliberated long and anxiously; and at last, to use his own words, "with the best verses he could write, and with very little more, he quitted the place of his birth, not without the most serious apprehensions of the consequences of such a step." Of Chatterton, and his melancholy end, he had heard nothing.

But whatever may be thought of the prudence of his adventure, it is clear that he had not at any rate forgotten, amid the tumult of his hopes and fears, to look up to his God. The concluding sentence of an entry in one of his note-books, dated just before his departure, runs thus:—"Whether I live, or whether I die, whether I be poor, or whether I be prosperous, O, my Saviour, may I be thine." His journal, addressed to Miss Elmy, comprises about three months of the year of trial which now awaited him. Over the remainder of that year a veil has been drawn, perhaps wisely, for the deeper trials and humiliations of a man are chiefly of use as a lesson to himself, and his prayers and cries under them are a holy of holies, to be often revisited by memory, but not recorded for the world. Three months of this journal are extant, and will serve us as a contrast to the sad three months of Chatterton's London career.

He found a lodging with a Mrs. Burcham, the wife of a linen-draper in Cornhill, who had been an acquaintance of Miss Elmy. In his journal, which he from time to time despatched to this latter lady, he describes, with a singular modesty, his attempts as an author. His cheerfulness seems to be wonderfully kept up under his many reverses. "We are helped, I am persuaded," he says in one place, "with spirits in our necessities."

He regularly attends the public means of grace, and two abstracts of sermons, from which he had found comfort, appear in his notes; the one on the text, "Many are called, but few are chosen;" and the other on the words, "Awake, thou that sleepest," etc. But our concern is rather to gather up from his more private notes, which prove the Divine life to have existed in his soul, and refer his patient endurance under his trial, and his final deliverance, to their right source, his humble trust in God. His trials drove him to his Saviour, for he says:—"O gracious Redeemer, fill me, I beseech thee, with divine love; let me, O my Saviour, set my affections on thee and on things above; take from me this over-carefulness and anxiety about the affairs of this mortal body, and deeply impress on my thoughts the care of my immortal soul. Let me love thee, blessed Lord, desire thee, and embrace thy cross when it is offered me."

Not only were his prayers earnest, his faith was also clear and evangelical. "God," he says, "is good. Christ is our only mediator and advocate. He suffered for our sins. By his stripes we are healed. As in Adam all die, so in Christ all are made alive. Whoso believeth shall be saved. But faith without works is dead. Yet it is the grace of God that worketh in us. Every good and every perfect gift cometh from above. Man can do nothing of himself; but Christ is all in all; and, whatsoever things ye shall ask in the name of Jesus, shall be granted. This is sufficient; this is plain; I ask no philosophic researches, no learned definitions; I want not to dispute, but to be saved. Lord! save me, or I perish. I only know my own vileness, I only know thy sufficiency: these are enough; witness heaven and earth, my trust is in God's mercy through Jesus Christ, my blessed Redeemer, Amen." And the trust he here expresses again and again finds utterance in such expressions as—"Behold, I trust in thee, blessed Lord. Guide me and govern me unto the end. O Lord, my salvation, be thou ever with me. Amen."

These were the reflections and prayers of a man whom want stared in the face, and who was at the time enduring, says his son and biographer, an accumulation of sorrows, under which "a spirit less manly and less religious must have sunk altogether." We have already seen an actual proof of the truth of this remark.

In the beginning of 1781, a providential suggestion to Mr. Crabbe's mind, which he himself characterises as "some propitious influence," prompted him to make one more effort, and apply to the celebrated Mr. Burke; and on being permitted an interview, he took with him his compositions, from which the poem called "The Library" was selected for publication. From that time the battle of his life was won: the blessing for which he had prayed and waited, dawned upon him, and steadily increased.

We have been induced to put the contemporary career of these two children of genius into contrast, by the conviction that an all-wise God did show forth in their histories the great truth that in all ages, and in every rank in life, he is "the deliverer of them that trust in him." May the lesson tell upon some struggler, into whose hands this paper may fall.

SEARCH FOR STRAY HORSES IN THE AUSTRALIAN BUSH.

THE following passage, from Howitt's "Two Years in Victoria," gives a good idea of the harassing trials and perils to which the gold seekers of this colony are exposed. Hundreds of horses are daily thus going astray or are seized by the bushrangers that infest the country:—

"We passed a pleasant quiet time at this encampment till four o'clock in the evening. We had cooked some of our mutton, and made a roll-pudding; and at that hour, as we went into our tent to dinner, we could see our horses quietly grazing in the swamp. When we came out, after dinner, they were not to be seen. Alfred and Charlton set off to see where they had strayed into the woods, and, to their consternation, could not find them. Alfred came back in haste, and I set off with them. As the inn is a central spot, where many travellers, bullock-draysmen, horse-dealers, and others meet, it was looked on by our party as a dangerous spot, and we were alarmed lest they might be driven off. The thieves of these colonies are, as I have had occasion to show, accomplished thieves, and none more so than the horse-stealers. A drayman had just told us, that as he had stopped to refresh at a roadside public-house, and tied his saddle-horse to a post before the door, where he had a full view of him, he saw a man ride up, untie his horse's bridle from the post, and gallop off with it before he could run out and stop him. Pursuit was vain, and he never saw the horse again. These fellows plunge into the woods, and make their way where no stranger can follow them. They will creep on their hands and knees up to a horse on the off side, leap upon him, and ride him away from the very presence of spectators. Dr. Howitt, when he used to ride his rounds at Melbourne, commonly tied his horse at the door of the house where his patient was. One day, on coming out, it was gone. Some one wanted a saddle and bridle, but the horse was too well known, and it came home minus the aforesaid articles.

"Well, alarmed for the safety of the horses, we traversed the woods all round the swamp till it was dark. Nothing of them was to be seen, and it was inconceivable that they could have strayed far with their feet hobbled. After tea, as it was moonlight, we posted away again; and this time doctor C. accompanied us. We went different ways, and roamed about for hours, but with no success. Considering the unlimited extent of the woods, we thought, with well-founded dread, of the distance which they might have strayed by morning, if they had merely strayed. We returned weary and dispirited; it seemed such a bad commencement of our expedition. The horses could not be replaced under 120*l.*; and Alfred would have to walk down to Melbourne to get them advertised, with a description, and bring fresh horses up. Meanwhile we must be sticking on that hill alone, a melancholy group, full of vexation and anxiety.

Alfred, Charlton, and I now traversed a wide range of hills and valleys in quest of the horses

from this early hour till noon; and some of our party mounted their horses and aided in the search. One of these, however, had gone, half famished, to a station in the woods, and had been well entertained. After riding away and hunting about till near evening, he came to another house, as he supposed, and entered, to request another refreshment, when, to his astonishment, he found himself in the midst of the same hospitable family, having made a circuit of the house, as the doctor had made that of our camp. However, he was only received with a burst of good-natured laughter, and again well entertained.

"We now gave the horses up for stolen, and sat down to dinner, dejected, and without appetite. Alfred, tired as he was, would set off to Melbourne that night, lest the horses might be too far gone to give any chance to an advertisement. In the midst of our despirited silence, we heard a boy say in a neighbouring tent, 'Mr. Howitt's horses are heard of.' We sprang up simultaneously, and encountered the boy at the door. He told us that a bullock-driver who was at the inn had seen the horses up amongst the hills seven miles off. Away we hastened; found the man, a dark-complexioned, black-eyed, bearded fellow, who in England would have been taken for a gipsy or a tramping potter, and who probably was of gipsy origin. He was quite confident that they were our horses; had passed us on the road, noticed them then, and now described them. He said the hills where they were, still in their hobbles, were intricate, and would be difficult to trace, but offered to go with us for a consideration. A pound note put amazing activity into him; and once more we were off on a seven miles' tramp, and seven miles back that night, if possible.

"The man went on at a round pace, the neck of a bottle of beer peeping out of his coat pocket, showing that he had thought of a refresher on his long run; and we speedily struck into the woods. A young man of the party accompanied us. Our guide led us up amongst lofty and solitary hills, silent and solemn as night. We ascended and descended amongst the tall white columns of the white gum-trees, and the brown, rugged, and huge stems of the stringy-barks, on and on, saluted only by the voices of the birds above us. The laughing-jackass seemed to jeer us, as if in pursuit of a false hope; and the magpies treated us to their indescribably comic and yet musical chorus. Mile after mile we went on through the hills and the woods, getting ever deeper and deeper into their intricate glens; the drayman, as we reached an eminence, pointing to the lofty ranges which we had seen from our camp on the other side of the valley, and telling us, for our comfort, that the highest range there was Mount Disappointment; that, if our horses got into that labyrinth of hills, they were lost for ever; that in the valleys between those hills there are scores of horses that have escaped, and in time grown wild and irreclaimable; that one valley ran into another, and that into a third, and so on, in such a network, that it is exceedingly difficult for any one going in to find his way out again; and that a gentleman

some time ago who attempted to explore them, never was heard of till his bones were found. He said, three months before, a horse of his escaped thither, and he had tried to recover it in vain. The herd is called 'Wills's wild mob,' and they range at will, knowing the defiles of the hills better than any human creature. In those valleys, he added, the wood is so dense that it is almost dark at noon. Fern-trees grow there to a great size, and close so thickly above your head that you cannot see the sky.

"Listening to these stories, we went on into the heart of the hills, till we reached a post-and-rail fence, called Macdonald's Paddock. Here the man said he had seen them not many hours ago, and that they were following the fence, as if desirous to get through. But here they were not now. The young man, who accompanied us so far, now touched me on the elbow, and gave me a sign to follow him a little aside. He then asked me, 'If I was not suspicious of the man? If I did not fear that he was leading us into this lonely and desolate region for some purpose of his own? Whether it might not be to some haunt of robbers with whom he was in league?' I laughed at his fears; but he only shook his head, and said I might laugh, but for his part he should go no farther. He did not like the man, and could not trust him; so here he turned back. We, however, had no such fears. The man was evidently one of those who have lived much in the bush, and on the roads, and by the alehouse fire; who had seen much of that sort of life, and had knowledge and instincts belonging to that kind of experience. He had a merry twinkle in his dark eye, and his round, dusky face, and somewhat upturned nose, was full of knowingness. Presently he pointed out the hoof-marks of the horses in the soft mud. They were clearly those of our missing horses: we were sufficiently acquainted with the peculiar size and shape of their hoofs; and they were still clearly hobbled, as the two fore feet were always put down together. Inspired by the sight, we followed the track for a mile or more, then lost it in the hard ground, then sought it in a different direction, but in vain. Night was now fast falling, and here it falls quickly. If we did not recover the horses that night, ere morning they might have escaped into the Mount Disappointment ranges, and then goodbye to them. Our anxiety returned, and we proposed to follow on in the direction that they had last been taking. In a few minutes we met a stockman on horseback, and in answer to our inquiries he said, 'Yes, those horses are in the next flat.'

"Imagine the effect of these words! Weary as we were, we hurried on, and there, sure enough, in a large swampy meadow, with a great herd of bullocks, the two wretched vagrants were grazing. The gray had already reached the foot of the very hills we had to dread; and the next morning we might have sought them in vain. Our return to the camp with the horses was regarded with astonishment; for the young man who went back had carried a dismal story of our wild-goose chase, and the party expected little else but that we were already murdered."